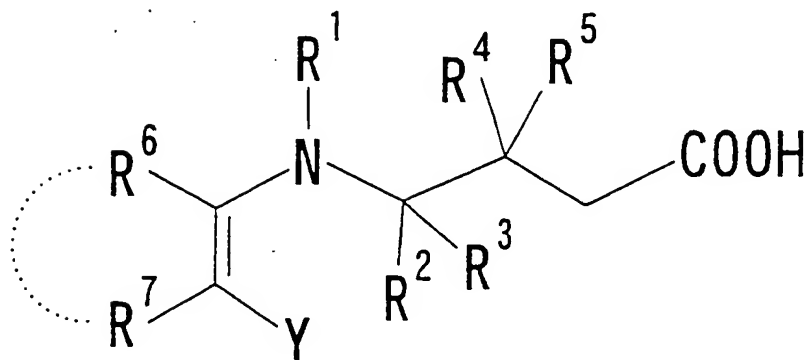


In the Claims

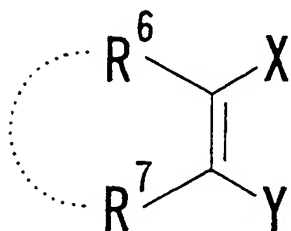
Please substitute the following claims 8 and 12 for the claims 8 and 12 now pending in the above-identified application.

Please cancel claims 9 and 13.

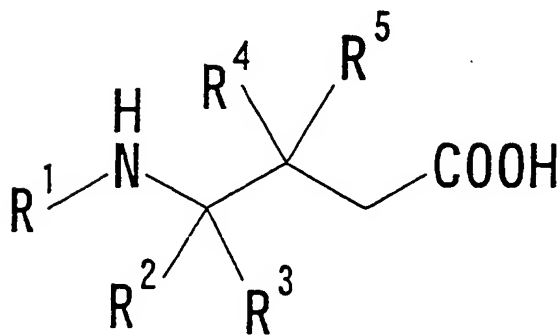
1. (Withdrawn) A process for the preparation of a compound of the formula:



wherein each variable is as defined below, or a salt thereof, characterized in that a compound of the formula:

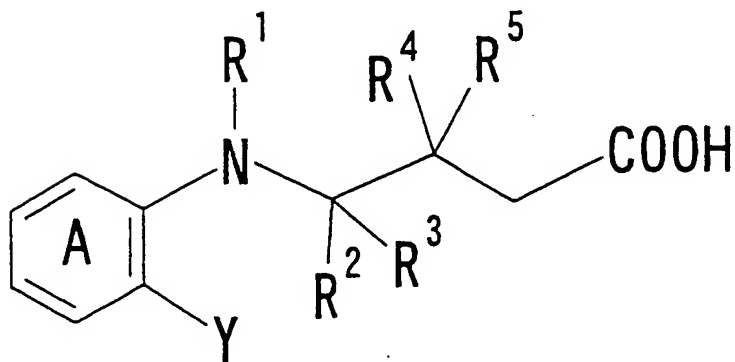


wherein X is a halogen atom; Y is an electron-withdrawing group; R^6 and R^7 are independently a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, an optionally substituted amino group, an optionally substituted hydroxyl group, an optionally substituted thiol group, an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group, or an optionally substituted heterocyclic group; or R^6 and R^7 may form a ring, or a salt thereof, is allowed to react with a compound of the formula:

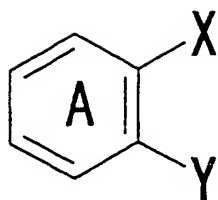


wherein R^1 is an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group, an optionally substituted acyl group, or an optionally substituted sulfonyl group; R^2 , R^3 , R^4 , and R^5 are independently a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, an optionally substituted amino group, an optionally substituted hydroxyl group, an optionally substituted thiol group, an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group, or an optionally substituted heterocyclic group; or R^1 and R^2 , R^1 and R^4 , R^2 and R^3 , R^4 and R^5 , or R^2 and R^4 may form a ring, or a salt thereof.

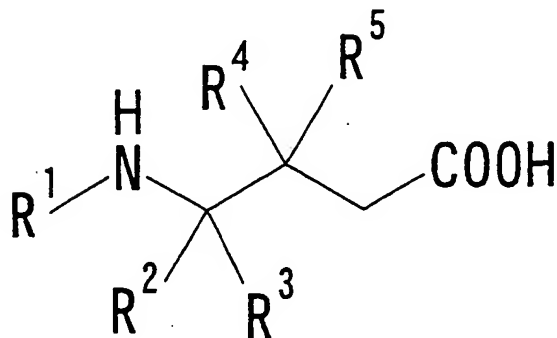
2. (Withdrawn) The preparation process according to claim 1, wherein Y is an optionally substituted acyl group.
3. (Withdrawn) The preparation process according to claim 1, wherein R^2 , R^3 , R^4 , and R^5 are hydrogen atoms.
4. (Withdrawn) The preparation process according to claim 1, wherein R^1 is an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group.
5. (Withdrawn) A process for the preparation of a compound of the formula:



wherein each variable is as defined below, or a salt thereof, characterized in that a compound of the formula:

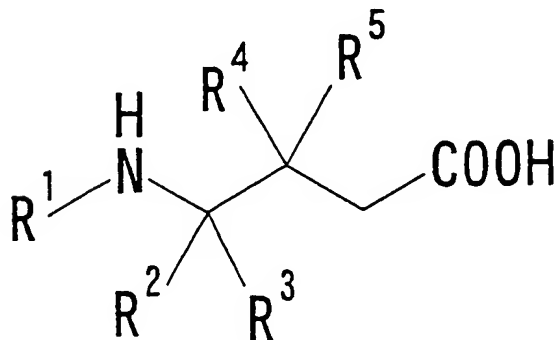


wherein X is a halogen atom; Y is an electron-withdrawing group; and ring A is an optionally substituted benzene ring, or a salt thereof, is allowed to react with a compound of the formula:

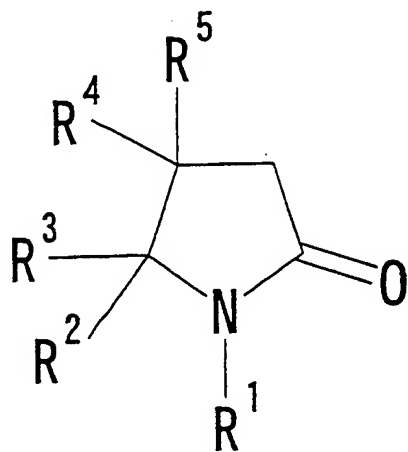


wherein R¹ is an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group, an optionally substituted acyl group, or an optionally substituted sulfonyl group; R², R³, R⁴, and R⁵ are independently a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, an optionally substituted amino group, an optionally substituted hydroxyl group, an optionally substituted thiol group, an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group, or an optionally substituted heterocyclic group; or R¹ and R², R¹ and R⁴, R² and R³, R⁴ and R⁵, or R² and R⁴ may form a ring, or a salt thereof.

6. (Withdrawn) The preparation process according to claim 1, characterized in that a compound of the formula:

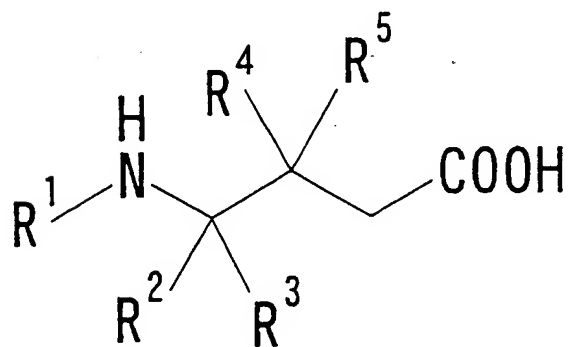


wherein each variable is as defined in claim 1, or a salt thereof, is used, which is obtained by hydrolyzing a compound of the formula:

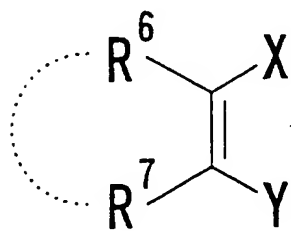


wherein each variable is as defined in claim 1, or a salt thereof.

7. (Withdrawn) The preparation process according to claim 6, characterized in that the compound of the formula:

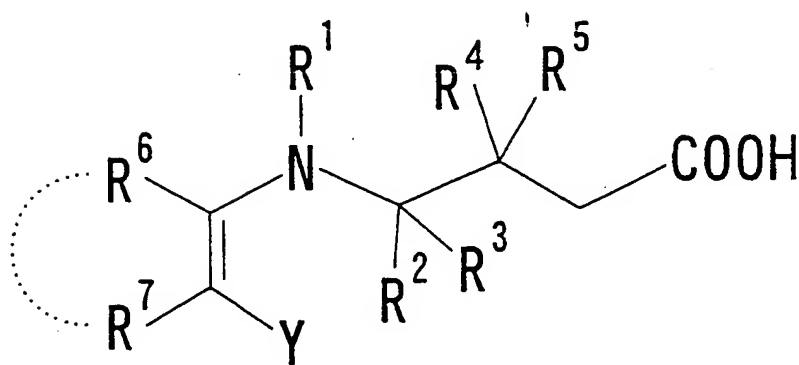


wherein each variable is as defined in claim 1, or a salt thereof, is subjected, without being isolated, to the reaction with the compound of the formula:



wherein each variable is as defined in claim 1, or a salt thereof.

8. (Currently Amended) A compound of the formula:



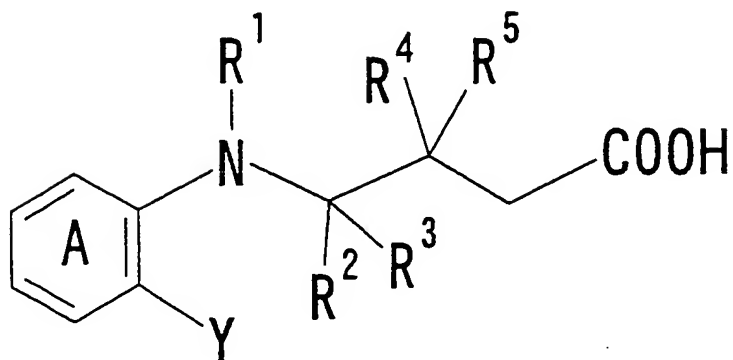
wherein Y is an optionally substituted acyl group ~~electron-withdrawing group~~; R¹ is an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group, an optionally substituted acyl group, or an optionally substituted sulfonyl group; R², R³, R⁴, R⁵, R⁶, and R⁷ are independently a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, an optionally substituted amino group, an optionally substituted hydroxyl group, an optionally substituted thiol group, an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group, or an optionally substituted heterocyclic group; or R¹ and R², R¹ and R⁴, R² and R³, R⁴ and R⁵, R² and R⁴, or R⁶ and R⁷ may form a ring, or a salt thereof.

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Original) The compound according to claim 8, wherein R², R³, R⁴, and R⁵ are hydrogen atoms.

11. (Original) The compound according to claim 8, wherein R¹ is an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group.

12. (Currently Amended) A compound of the formula:



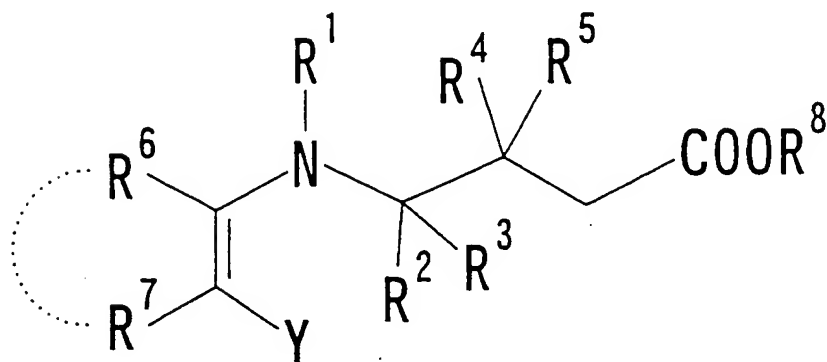
wherein Y is an optionally substituted acyl group ~~electron-withdrawing group~~; ring A is an optionally substituted benzene ring; R¹ is an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group, an optionally substituted acyl group, or an optionally substituted sulfonyl group; R², R³, R⁴, and R⁵ are independently a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, an optionally substituted amino group, an optionally substituted hydroxyl group, an optionally substituted thiol group, an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group, or an optionally substituted heterocyclic group; or R¹ and R², R¹ and R⁴, R² and R³, R⁴ and R⁵, or R² and R⁴ may form a ring, or a salt thereof.

13. (Cancelled)

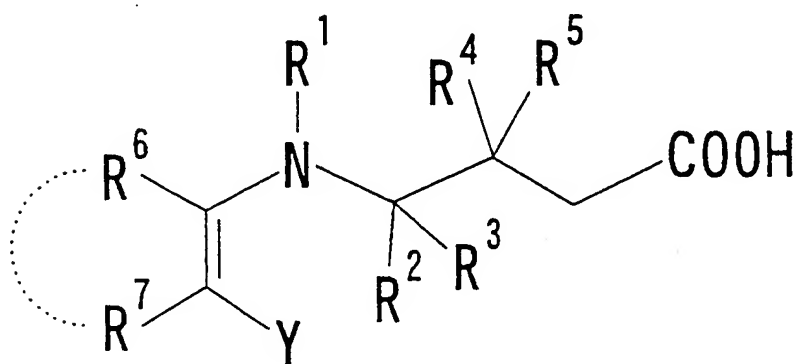
14. (Original) The compound according to claim 12, wherein R², R³, R⁴, and R⁵ are hydrogen atoms.

15. (Original) The compound according to claim 12, wherein R¹ is an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group.

16. (Withdrawn) A process for the preparation of a compound of the formula:



wherein R⁸ is an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group and the other variables are as defined below, or a salt thereof, characterized in that a compound of the formula:



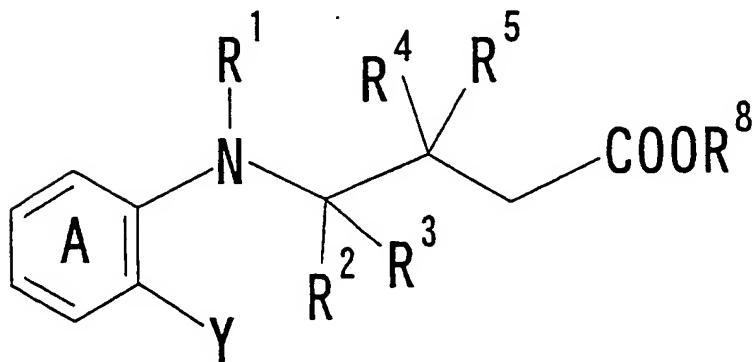
wherein each variable is as defined in claim 1, or a salt thereof, which is obtained by the preparation process according to claim 1, is subjected to esterification.

17. (Withdrawn) The preparation process according to claim 16, wherein Y is an optionally substituted acyl group.

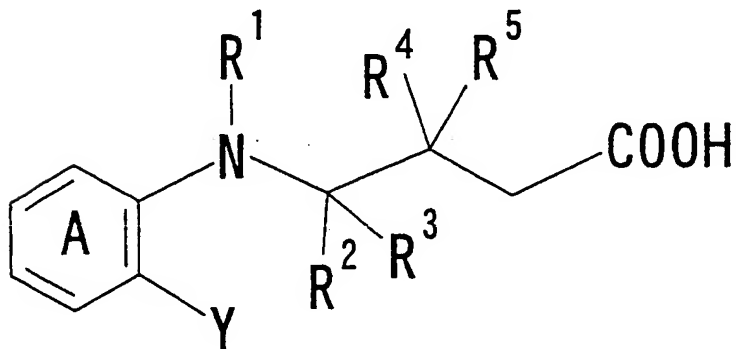
18. (Withdrawn) The preparation process according to claim 16, wherein R², R³, R⁴, and R⁵ are hydrogen atoms.

19. (Withdrawn) The preparation process according to claim 16, wherein R^1 is an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group.

20. (Withdrawn) A process for the preparation of a compound of the formula:

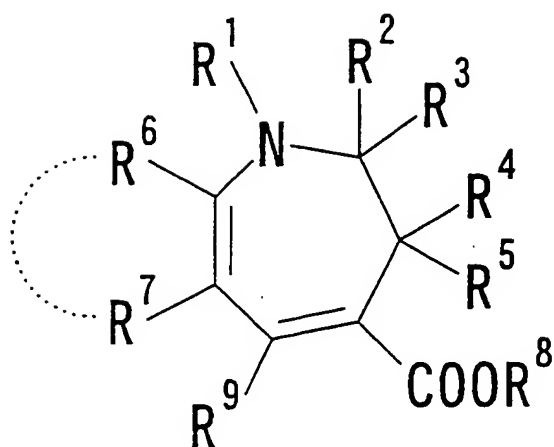


wherein R^8 is an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group and the other variables are as defined below, or a salt thereof, characterized in that a compound of the formula:

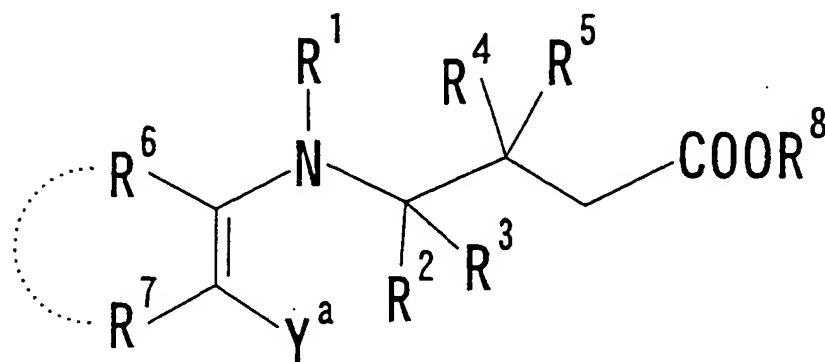


wherein each variable is as defined in claim 5, or a salt thereof, which is obtained by the preparation process according to claim 5, is subjected to esterification.

21. (Withdrawn) A process for the preparation of a compound of the formula:



wherein R⁹ is a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group, and the other variables are as defined below, or a salt thereof, characterized in that a compound of the formula:



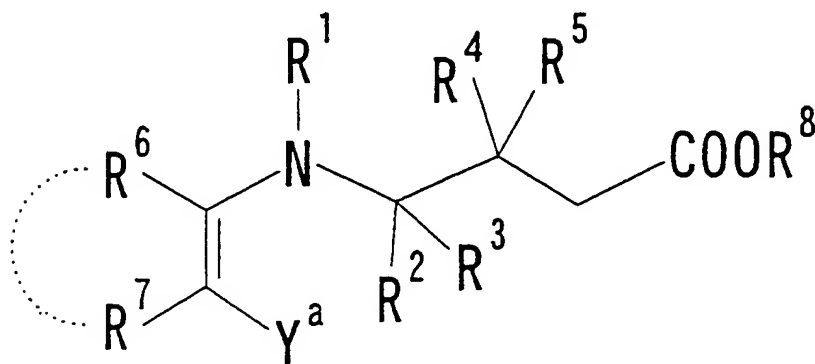
wherein Y^a is a group of formula -COR⁹ wherein R⁹ is a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group, and the other variables are as defined in claim 16, or a salt thereof, which is obtained by the preparation process according to claim 16, is subjected to ring-closing reaction.

22. (Withdrawn) The preparation process according to claim 21, wherein R⁹ is a hydrogen atom.

23. (Withdrawn) The preparation process according to claim 21, wherein R², R³, R⁴, and R⁵ are hydrogen atoms.

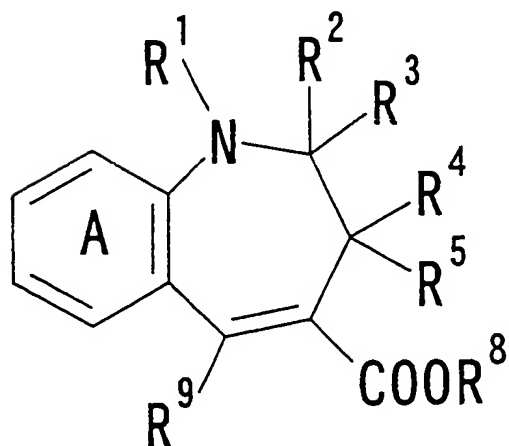
24. (Withdrawn) The process according to claim 21, wherein R^1 is an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group.

25. (Withdrawn) The preparation process according to claim 21, characterized in that a compound of the formula:

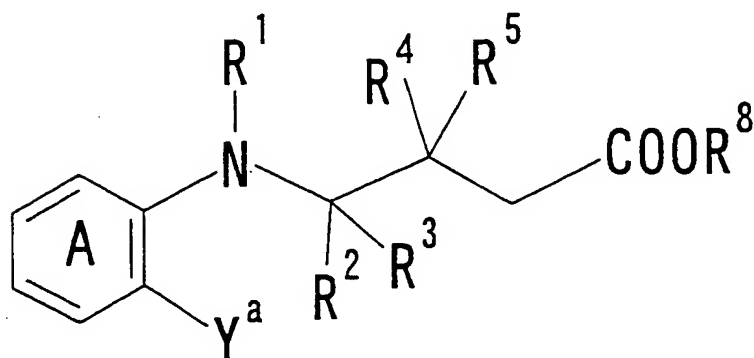


wherein Y^a is a group of formula $-COR^9$ wherein R^9 is a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group, and the other variables are as defined in claim 16, or a salt thereof, which is obtained by the preparation process according to claim 16, is subjected, without being isolated, to ring-closing reaction.

26. (Withdrawn) A process for the preparation of a compound of the formula:



wherein R^9 is a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group, and the other variables are as defined below, or a salt thereof, characterized in that a compound of the formula:



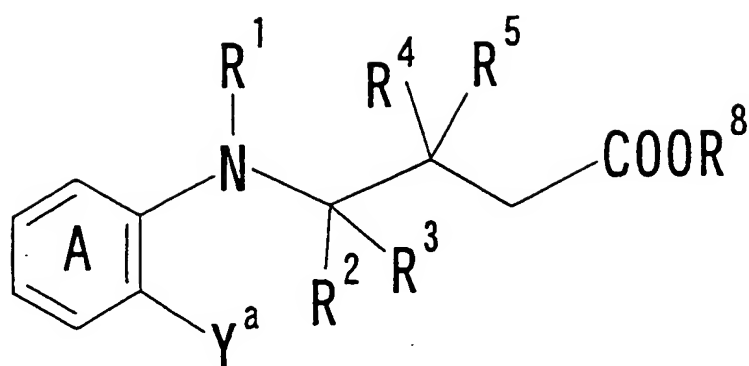
wherein Y^a is a group of formula $-COR^9$ wherein R^9 is a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group, and the other variables are as defined in claim 20, or a salt thereof, which is obtained by the preparation process according to claim 20, is subjected to ring-closing reaction.

27. (Withdrawn) The preparation process according to claim 26, wherein R^9 is a hydrogen atom.

28. (Withdrawn) The preparation process according to claim 26, wherein R^2 , R^3 , R^4 , and R^5 are hydrogen atoms.

29. (Withdrawn) The preparation process according to claim 26, wherein R^1 is an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group.

30. (Withdrawn) The preparation process according to claim 26, characterized in that a compound of the formula:



wherein Y^a is a group of formula $-COR^9$ wherein R^9 is a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group, and the other variables are as defined in claim 20, or a salt thereof, which is obtained by the preparation process according to claim 20, is subjected, without being isolated, to ring-closing reaction.